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SUBJECT: WEARY MINNAWI EXPRESSES "NO HOPE" FOR DARFUR

Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a December 15 meeting with CDA Whitehead, Senior Presidential Assistant Minni Minnawi lamented that the international community has shifted its attention to North-South relations at the expense of Darfur. Characterizing Southern secession as a foregone conclusion, he expressed disappointment that the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) had "reaped the benefits" of Juba Alliance opposition rallies in Khartoum and then abandoning the causes of other opposition parties, including his own Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). He also stated that electoral officials have refused to accredit SLM as a political party, on the grounds that its fighters have not yet disarmed or been integrated into the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in accordance with the Darfur Peace Agreement, though the GOS has done virtually nothing to implement the agreement. Neither rebel nor political party leader, Minnawi remains in limbo. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Minnawi offered little commentary on the state of play in Darfur, characterizing the political process as having "no movement." He remains uninvolved in the Doha process, he said. (Note: The UN/AU Joint Mediation Support Team contends their mandate is to engage with non-signatories of the DPA and not Minnawi. End Note.) He criticized the international community for abandoning Darfur and in particular the DPA, leaving him to his own devices and Darfur to suffer. He alleged that the NCP has returned to its old tricks of arming militias and pitting tribe against tribe, this time in the Sharia locality of South Darfur where the Birgid and other tribes indigenous to the area have been "wiping out the Zaghawa." (Note: 2009 witnessed a mass exodus of Zaghawa from South Darfur following SLA/Minnawi's ceding of territory there to the GOS after the failed JEM attack on Muhajeriyah in early 2009. End Note.)

¶3. (C) Minnawi offered a similarly bleak view on elections, asserting that the NCP has already "rigged" the entire electoral process. Though Minnawi claims his SLM has significant political support in Darfur, it has been stymied by electoral officials who refuse to grant the movement political party status on the basis that his forces have not yet disarmed or integrated into the SAF, though the GOS has done virtually nothing to hold up its end of the deal. Because of lack of support for the DPA from the international community, "the government does not feel bound by it," he said.

¶4. (C) Out of frustration, Minnawi had become active in the Juba Alliance of opposition parties, and SLM's offices in Omdurman have served as a base and rallying point for many demonstrators. He expressed disillusionment with the SPLM, however, which he accused of "reaping the benefits" of the protests at the expense of everyone else. Minnawi asserted

that that the majority of demonstrators came not from SPLM but from his own movement and other opposition parties whose causes the South-centric SPLM cared little about. "They have abandoned Darfur. They only use the issue of Darfur "as leverage in their political battles with the NCP," he said.

15. (C) Comment: Minnawi remains a marginal figure on the Khartoum political landscape, both through his own inactivity and the genius of the NCP hard-liners who inked him into the DPA. Although he is technically the fourth most powerful person in the Government of National Unity, Minnawi admitted to the press earlier this month to having "minimal influence" in governmental affairs. The Juba Alliance's demonstrations have centered around SLM/MM headquarters in Omdurman, more thanks to the compound's convenient location than to SLM's activity. Although he may settle comfortably into the role of another indifferent northern opposition leader, Minnawi proved unable to articulate a plan for his movement's future both in Darfur, and in Sudan. End comment.

WHITEHEAD